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空廼カイリ
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クロアキメラ 2

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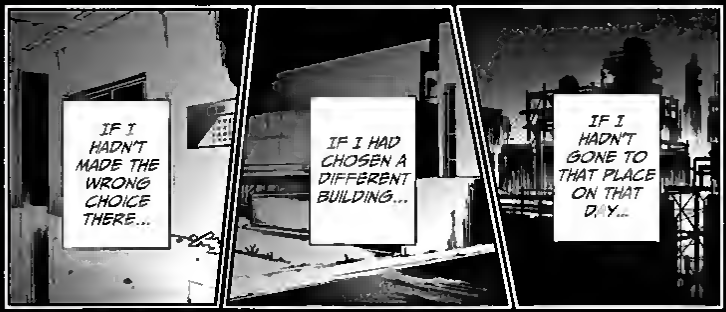
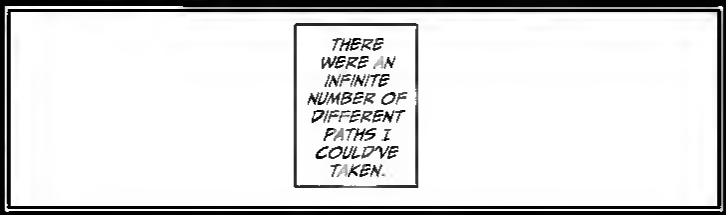

IF I HADN'T MADE THE WRONG CHOICE THERE...
IF I HAD CHOSEN A DIFFERENT BUILDING...
IF I HADN'T GONE TO THAT PLACE ON THAT DAY...


THERE WERE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PATHS I COULD'VE TAKEN.

EVEN TODAY,

I STILL REGRET IT ALL.

THREE YEARS AGO...
YOU WANT AN ULTRA-SOUND?
THAT MACHINE IS...
YOU KNOW THAT THING WHERE YOU SMEAR SOME STUFF ON THE PATIENT AND RUB IT ALL AROUND WITH THE HANDLE THING
WHAT KIND OF AWFUL DESCRIP-TION IS THAT?
AREN'T YOU A DOCTOR!?
BESIDES, A DIRT-POOR DOCTOR LIKE YOU COULDN'T AFFORD IT.
SHIRABE...

IT'S THE TRUTH, BUT YOU DIDN'T NEED TO REMIND ME...
IT WOULD JUST BE NICE TO HAVE IT, THAT'S ALL...
WELL, YOU ARE AN INTERNIST AFTER ALL. MORE OR LESS
HEY WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
I'M NOT LENDING YOU ANY MONEY.
NO ONE WANTS TO BORROW FROM A SHARK LIKE YOU ANYWAY.
I'M GOING TO PICK ONE UP AROUND THERE,
Takaomi Shi
ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE THIRD WARD
AH YEAH, THE ABAN DONED FACTORY AREA, RIGHT?
MAKES SENSE YOU'D DEFINITELY FIND SOME REPAIRABLE ONES THERE
!?

YOU SAID YOU WANTED A CENTRIFUGE, RIGHT?
HUH? WHEN DID I SAY...
YOU SAID IT, DIDN'T YOU?
WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY YOU WANTED TO TAKE OUT THE CAR? SO ANNOYING...
YOU'RE THE ONE MENTIONING MONEY AT EVERY LITTLE THING.

WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!!
ONE HOUR OF LOOKING AROUND SHOULD BE ENOUGH.
SO I'M HELPING YOU CARRY THE STUFF, SO I DON'T OWE ANYTHING.
HOW 'BOUT WE SPLIT UP TO SEARCH AND MARK THE THINGS WE WANT, THEN GO BACK AND CARRY THEM OUT?
SOUNDS GOOD
THE POLLUTED SECTOR'S ABANDONED FACTORY AREA...
THIS SECTOR IS LOCATED ON THE THIRD WARD'S EASTERN SIDE
THOUGH IT IS CONSIDERED A POOR WARD TODAY, IN THE PAST IT WAS MANAGED BY THE MIDDLE WARD
THE MIDDLE WARD HAD BUILT UP A PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY FOR THE SAKE OF THE RESIDENTS TODAY ALL OF THE REMAINS OF THE ABANDONED FACTORIES AND RESEARCH FACILITIES THAT ONCE HOSTED DEVELOPMENT OF BIO- AND MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY STILL STAND GROUTED IN THIS AREA
THE POLLUTION CAUSED BY THE FACTORY WASTE MATTER AND SEWAGE HAS BEEN IGNORED AND DISREGARDED FROM THE BEGINNING
AND EVEN NOW, IT IS BEING NEGLECTED AND BRANDED AS A FILTHY AREA.

CURRENTLY, A NEW SECTOR IS BEING ESTABLISHED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS LARGE SHELTER.
APPARENTLY, ALL OF THESE RESEARCH FACILITIES HAVE RELOCATED TO THERE.
BUT THEY LEFT A TON OF EQUIPMENT AND CHEMICALS BEHIND...
I HAVEN'T BEEN HERE SINCE I OPENED MY CLINIC...
BUT IT'S JUST AS FILTHY AS I REMEMBER IT.
THOSE MIDDLE WARD GUYS ONLY KNOW HOW TO MAKE A MESS AND POLLUTE.
THEY REALLY DON'T PLAN ON CLEANING IT UP AT ALL...

THAT LOOKS USEABLE
THIS PLACE IS A TREASURE TROVE
BUT ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, FOR POOR WARD HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND WASTE CONTRACTORS LIKE US
IF I MOVE THIS, I CAN...

...EY!
HEY! SHIRABE!
WHERE'D YOU GO?
UNGH...
OW...
....
DID I... BLACK OUT?
OH, THE FLOOR COLLAPSED UNDER MY FEET
DAMN, I WASN'T CAREFUL...

IT'S ALREADY BEEN AN HOUR, BUT HE HASN'T COME BACK...
HE DIDN'T GET STUCK SOMEWHERE, DID HE...?
!
YO...
H...
SHIRABE!?

WHAT HAPPENED!?
YOU'RE HURT!
AND IT DEFINITELY GOT CONTAMI-NATED..
FOR NOW, I TIED UP THE BASE OF MY LEG...
BUT AS FOR HOW DEEP IT GOT..
THIS... CAN'T BE...

I TREATED IT AS BEST AS I COULD.
BUT THIS IS...
Hh...
Hh...
YOU'VE MOST LIKELY CONTRACTED THE CHIMERA DISEASE.
SHIRABE, LISTEN CAREFULLY.

YOU'RE A DOCTOR, SO I ASSUME YOU'RE ALREADY AWARE OF WHAT THAT IS
I DON'T KNOW HOW CONCEN-TRATED THAT CHEMICAL WASTE WAS,
OR HOW DEEPLY IT INFECTED YOUR WOUND
I DON'T WANT TO MAKE ANY ASSUMPTIONS.
BUT IF YOU'RE A HALF-BEAST CASE, THEN YOUR TRANS-FORMATION WILL SETTLE DOWN IN ABOUT A MONTH.
MY EXAMINATION ENDS HERE
I KNOW IT'S TOUGH...
BUT ENDURE IT,
SHIRABE

GUH...
AH...
ENTIRE BODY FELT LIKE IT WAS BEING STABBED AND GOUGED OUT WITH KNIVES AND I COULDN'T DO A THING.
I WAS LUCKY THAT I HAD REPLENISHED MY GENERAL MEDICINE STOCK JUST BEFORE THE INCIDENT.
AND I HAD ALREADY SEEN AND DIAGNOSED MANY CASES OF HALF-BEASTS ALREADY.
SO I HAD A LARGE STOCK OF PAINKILLERS READY.
I THOUGHT THAT, SO LONG AS I COULD SURVIVE THIS PAIN, THE REST WOULD BE OKAY.

I TOLD MYSELF THAT TO KEEP MY SPIRITS UP.

JUST LIKE YOH TOLD ME, THE PAIN BEGAN TO RECEDE AFTER A MONTH PASSED.
BUT MY RELIEF THAT IT WAS FINALLY OVER WAS SHORT-LIVED...
AND ANOTHER HELL WAS WAITING FOR ME.
I DEVOURED ALL THE FOOD I HAD STOCKED UP, BUT I STILL HAD AN UNCONTROLLABLE HUNGER.
MY BODY LOST WEIGHT AT AN UNUSUALLY FAST PACE.
WITH THE HUNGER TORTURING ME
I JUST THREW THINGS INTO MY MOUTH, TRYING TO SATISFY MY STOMACH

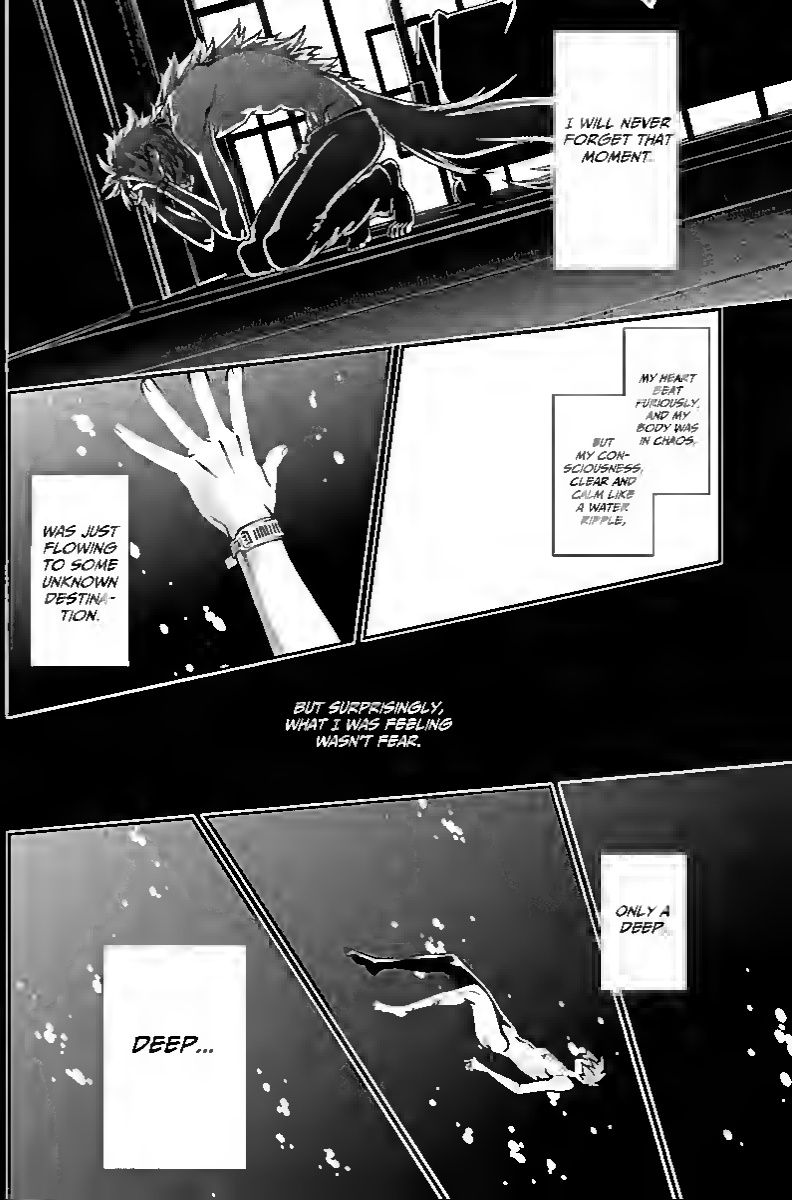
AND AT THE SAME PACE...
THE BEAST BEGAN TO APPEAR.

IN HALF A MONTH, IT HAD SPREAD OVER MY ENTIRE BODY.
IF I WERE A HALF-BEAST, THE TRANSFORMATION SHOULD HAVE STOPPED AT SOME POINT.
BUT IT CONTINUED TO SPREAD LIKE A MALIGNANT TUMOR.
AND AS THE SYMPTOMS PROGRESSED,
MY SELF-AWARENESS BEGAN TO FADE.
BUT IF I STRUGGLED AND HELD ONTO MY CONSCIOUSNESS,
FOR SOME ODD REASON, I WAS ABLE TO RETURN TO HUMAN FORM.

I JUST KEPT TRYING DIFFERENT WAYS TO PRESERVE MY SANITY.
UNABLE TO EVEN THINK CLEARLY ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT I HAD BECOME A BEASTMAN,
I FORGOT ABOUT EATING AND SLEEPING
I FOCUSED SOLELY ON STAYING "MYSELF."
I COULDN'T EVEN CLOSE MY EYES OR I'D RISK BREAKING MY CONSCIOUSNESS. THE REASON I SURVIVED IN THAT STATE FOR TWO MONTHS
WASN'T BECAUSE MY MIND OR SPIRIT WAS STRONG

IT WAS SIMPLY BECAUSE I WAS TERRIFIED
I HADN'T DIED,
JUST THAT DREADFUL FEELING...
BUT THE IDEA THAT "I" WOULD DISAPPEAR...
KEPT ME GOING FOR TWO MONTHS.

FOR TWO MONTHS, I PATHETICALLY CLUNG TO "MYSELF."
BUT WITH NO PLAN OR SOLUTION, DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER WAS BOUND TO EXHAUST ME.
I WAS WAY PAST MY LIMIT,
AND SO I COMPLETELY BROKE DOWN AFTER LIVING ON THE EDGE FOR A TOTAL OF THREE MONTHS. IT WAS LIKE ALL THE FIGHTING I DID UP UNTIL THEN WAS FOR NOTHING


I WILL NEVER FORGET THAT MOMENT.
MY HEART BEAT FURIOUSLY, AND MY BODY WAS IN CHAOS.
BUT MY CONSCIOUSNESS, CLEAR AND CALM LIKE A WATER RIPPLE,
WAS JUST FLOWING TO SOME UNKNOWN DESTINATION.
BUT SURPRISINGLY, WHAT I WAS FEELING WASN'T FEAR.
ONLY A DEEP.
DEEP...

REGRET
TOWARDS
THAT DAY...

THAT WAS ALL.

AND THE REASON WHY I WAS ABLE TO COME BACK FROM THAT STATE,
AND WHY I WASN'T KILLED, AND AM SITTING HERE AS A CAREFREE DOCTOR,
IS BECAUSE OF A MIRACLE
THE KIND OF LUCK THAT COMES ONCE IN A LIFETIME.
IF THE ONE I HAD MET THEN HADN'T BEEN *HER*
RIGHT NOW, I'D PROBABLY BE .

"HER?"
JAY, ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER...
!!
YOU ASKED HOW A STREET CHILD COULD SURVIVE OTHER THAN BECOMING A BEASTMAN...
UH, WELL THAT WAS...
IF I SAID THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY,
WOULD YOU COOL DOWN AND THINK ABOUT YOUR DECISION?

THE RISKS ARE A LOT LOWER THAN BECOMING A BEASTMAN
WHAT...!?
DO YOU WANT TO TRY IT OUT?